

AGENDA: February 10, 2004

4.2

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: Community Development

TITLE: Neighborhood Grant Guidelines
Amendment

RECOMMENDATION

The Council Neighborhoods Committee recommends that the Council adopt the amendments to the Neighborhood Grant Guidelines to make mobile home park resident committees eligible for neighborhood grant funds and streamline application procedures (Attachment 1 of the staff report).

FISCAL IMPACT

No additional funding for the Neighborhood Grant Program is being requested, so there is no fiscal impact. Currently, the Neighborhood Grant Program is allocated \$10,000 annually from the General Fund, and this has been sufficient to cover grant requests. Grant funds that are not spent each year are returned to the General Fund.

DISCUSSION

The Neighborhood Grant Program began on a trial basis in 1999 and has proven to be a valuable tool in promoting new neighborhood associations and strengthening existing ones. Since the program's inception, two new neighborhood associations have started, and existing neighborhood associations have been able to expand their activities and outreach.

The Council Neighborhoods Committee (CNC) oversees the Neighborhood Grant Program and makes recommendations on program refinements. On April 10, 2001, the City Council approved a CNC recommendation to amend the Neighborhood Grant Guidelines to make informal neighborhood groups eligible for grants. As a result of this change, a new neighborhood association grew out of several informal neighborhood groups that initially received grant funding.

At their October 16, 2003 meeting, the CNC recommended another refinement to the Guidelines that would make mobile home park resident committees eligible for neighborhood grants (refer to minutes in Attachment 2). There are six mobile home parks in Mountain View and two smaller trailer parks. Four of the parks have approximately 150 homes, one has approximately 200 homes and the largest has approximately 360 homes.

Neighborhood grants could assist resident committees in these parks to organize activities, advertise their meetings and improve the quality of life in these parks.

Annual grant awards have generally been limited to a maximum of \$1,500 for each organization. In past years, there have always been sufficient funds to cover all grant requests, plus the \$500 in advertising expenses for the program. Grants and expenditures for the past three years are shown in the following chart:

Year of Grant Program	Total Funds Granted	Total Funds Spent
Fiscal Year 2001-02	\$5,150	\$4,612
Fiscal Year 2002-03	\$7,542	\$5,677
Fiscal Year 2003-04	\$7,470	\$3,240 (to date)

- Notes:
1. Prior to Fiscal Year 2001-02, grants were not awarded on a fiscal year basis.
 2. In Fiscal Year 2002-03, one group did not use their \$1,500 grant.

Adding mobile home park resident committees to the grant program may result in smaller grants for future grant recipients. The CNC will be monitoring the grant program and could recommend future changes to the program based on the impact of this amendment. If the Council approves this amendment to the Guidelines, residents in the City's mobile home parks will be notified of the availability of neighborhood grants with the next funding cycle for Fiscal Year 2004-05.

At the CNC's October meeting, the committee also discussed whether to open grant applications only once a year or allow grant applications to be submitted throughout the year as long as grant funds are available. For the Fiscal Year 2003-04 grant program, the CNC decided to try an open process for grants and has, thus far, awarded two additional neighborhood grants for \$228.41 and \$300.00 at the October 16 meeting. However, the CNC found that neighborhood grants require a significant amount of administrative work since each one must be reviewed for eligibility, have individual contracts with the City and be monitored for reimbursement of grant activities. The CNC concluded that a once-a-year grant process would be more efficient. The Guidelines have been amended to clarify this process. The CNC has typically reviewed neighborhood grants in May or June to be consistent with the fiscal year budget cycle so that grants can be tracked more effectively.

Another topic discussed by the CNC at the October meeting is whether homeowners associations should be eligible for neighborhood grants. The CNC decided not to recommend changing the Guidelines to make homeowners associations eligible. Committee members noted that homeowner associations typically have a built-in organization and funding; therefore, support from the City is not required to create and maintain homeowners

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ALTERNATIVE

PUBLIC NOTICING

Approved by:

Elaine Costello
Community Development Director

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Attachments: 1. Amended Neighborhood Grant Guidelines
2. CNC October 16, 2003 Meeting Minutes